

“THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS” NO. 3442

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 21 1915
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 25, 1870

*“And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come:
 and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.”*
Haggai 2:7

THE second temple was never intended to be as magnificent as the first. The first was to be the embodiment of the full glory of the dispensation of symbols and types—and was soon to pass away. This comparative feebleness had been proved by the idolatry and apostasy of the people, Israel, and when they returned to Jerusalem they were to have a structure that would be sufficient for the purposes of their worship, but they were not again to be indulged with the splendors of the former house which God had erected by the hand of Solomon.

Had it been God's providence that a temple equally magnificent as the first should be erected, it might have been very readily accomplished. Cyrus appears to have been obedient to the divine will and to have been a great favorer of the Jews, but he expressly by edict diminished the length of the walls and gave express command that the walls should never be erected so high as before.

We have also evidence that a like decree was made by Darius, an equally great friend of the Jews, who could with the lifting of his finger have outdone the glory of Solomon's temple, but in God's providence it was not arranged that so it should be, and though Herod, not a Jew, and only a Jew by religious pretense to suit his own particular purpose, lavished a good deal of treasure upon the second temple, for the pleasure of the nation he ruled and to gain some favor from them, yet he rather profaned than adorned the temple, since he did not follow the prescribed architecture by which it ought to have been built, and he had not the divine approval upon his labors.

No prophet ever commanded, and no prophet ever sanctioned the labors of such a horrible wretch as that Herod. The reason seems to me to be this—in the second temple, during the time it should stand, the dispensation of Christ was softly melted into the light of spiritual truth. The outward worship was to cease there. It seems right that it should cease in a temple that had not the external glory of the first. God intended there to light up the first beams of the spiritual splendor of the second temple, namely, His true temple, the church, and he would put a sign of decay on the outward and visible in the temple of the first.

Yet He declares by His servant, Haggai, that the glory of the second temple should be greater than the first. It certainly was not so as in respect of gold, or silver, or size, or excellence of architecture—and yet it truly was so, for the glory of the presence of Christ was greater than all the glory of the old temple's wealth. And the glory of having the Gospel preached in it, the glory of having the Gospel miracles wrought in its porches by the apostles and by the Master, was far greater than any hecatombs of bullocks and he-goats—the glory of being, as it were, the cradle of the Christian church—the nest out of which should fly the messengers of peace, who, like doves, should bear the olive branch throughout the world.

I take it that the decadence of the old system of symbols was a most fitting preparation for the incoming of the system of grace and truth in the person of Jesus Christ. And the second temple has this glory which excels—that while the first was the glory of the moon in all its splendor, the second is the

moon going down—the sun is rising beyond her, gilding the horizon with the first beams of the morning.

I intend to speak to you at this time about *the true spiritual temple*, the true second temple, the spiritual temple, which, I think, is here spoken of—although the second temple literally is also intended—*the true spiritual temple built up, according to the text, as the desire of all nations*.

I find this passage a very difficult one in the original—it bears several meanings in itself. The first meaning that I give you, though it runs contrary to the great majority of Christian expositors, is the most accurate explanation of the original. We shall bring in the other explanations by and by.

Reading it thus, "I will shake all nations," and the desire—the desirable persons, the best part, or as the Septuagint reads it, the elect of all nations—shall come. They shall come—the true temple of God, and they shall be the living stones that shall compose it, or as others read it, "The desirable *things* of all nations shall come," which is, no doubt, the meaning, because the eighth verse gives the key—"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts." The desirable things of all nations are to be brought in as voluntary offerings to this true second temple, this spiritual living temple.

Let us begin, then, and take that sense first, and in this case we are told, in the text concerning this second temple, what these living stones are—

I. THE HISTORICAL DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS SHALL COME.

The choice men, the pick, the best of all men shall come and constitute the true temple of God. Not the kings and princes, not the great and noble after the flesh—these are but the choice of men after the manner of man's choice—but not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are chosen and called.

But still, those whom God chooses must be the choice ones of mankind. They will not claim to be so by nature—on the contrary, they will repudiate any idea of any natural goodness in themselves. But God sees them as what they are to be, as what He intends them to be, as what He makes them to be, and in this respect they are the desire, they are the choice of all nations.

To God, His people are His royal treasure, His secret jewels, the treasury of kings—they are very precious in His sight. Their very death is precious. He keeps record of their bones and will raise their dust at the last day. If the nation did but know it, the saints in a nation are the aristocracy of that nation. Those who fear God are the very soul, and marrow, and backbone of a nation.

For their sakes God has preserved many a nation. For their sakes He gives unnumbered blessings. "Ye are the salt of the earth"—the earth were putrid without them. "Ye are the light of the world"—the world would be dark without them. They are the desire, I say, though often the world treats them with contempt and would cast them out.

It has always been thus with the blind world—to treat its best friends worst—and its worst enemies often receive the most royal entertainment. Now what a joy it is to us to think that God has been pleased to make unto Himself a people according to His own sovereign will and good pleasure, and that He has made these to be the desirable ones out of all nations—that with these choice and elect ones He will build up His church.

But the text not only tells us of the stones, but of the remarkable mode of architecture. "The desire of all nations shall come"—*they shall be brought together*. Human means shall be used to bring each one to its place, to excavate each one from its quarry. But while it is God who speaks, He speaks like God, for He uses shalls and wills most freely, and according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus, or ever the earth was, so shall the fulfillment be.

We who preach the Gospel may preach with devout assurance of success. The desire of all nations *shall* come. Out of this congregation the truly desirable ones shall come to Christ. Out of the soil in which the sower sowed—the honest and good ground—is brought forth the harvest. Out of the nations, though they reject Christ and continue in their idolatry, yet there are some choice spirits who come—some whom the Lord looks upon with great delight—and these *shall* come.

We do not labor in vain, neither do we spend our strength for nought. We fall back upon the doctrine of divine working and divine choice for consolation—certainly not for an excuse for indolence, but for consolation when we have done our best, that God is glorified in the end—“the desire of all nations shall come.”

And if you will notice in the whole text, it appears that *they do not come without much shaking*. In one sense, no man comes to God with compulsion. And in another sense, no man comes without compulsion. You see two boxes opened. There are two ways of opening them. You see one box wrenched—there has been used evidently rough means. Who opened it? A thief. God never opens men’s hearts in that way.

You see another box open—no sign of damage, no sign of any particular labor. Who opened it? The person who had the key—probably the owner. Hearts belong to God, and He has the keys and opens them—sweetly opens them. And yet, though no force is used, that puts aside the positive, free agency of man which God interferes not with, yet there is a spiritual force which may well be described as a shaking.

It is only when the tree of the nation has a thorough shaking, that at last the prime, ripe fruit will drop down into the great Master’s lap. He shakes by providence, by the movement of the human conscience. He shakes by the impulses of His Holy Spirit. He shakes the spirit, and as the result the desirable persons out of all the nations are brought to Himself. Stones that He would have, come at last out of the quarry—and He builds them up into a temple.

And now observe that these persons, according to another rendering of the text, *when they come to build up the church, they always bring their desire with them*—they bring with them the most desirable thing. The desirable things of all nations shall give the silver, and the gold, and so on. He that comes to Christ brings with him all he has—and he has not come to Christ who has left his true substance behind him.

What, now, is the desire of all the nations when hearts are renewed? Well, silver and gold will always be desirable, and men who give their hearts to Christ will bring what they have of that to Christ. But the most desirable things of manhood are not metals—are they dirt, mere dross, hard materialisms—no, the desirable things of manhood are things of the soul, the heart, the spirit. And into the temple, the great second temple, there shall come, not masses of gold and silver merely, that can adorn with outward splendor, but also love, and faith, and holy virtue—more priceless than gems, far richer in value than rarest mines.

Oh! what a sight the church of God is when holy angels look upon it. We hear of some of the first Spanish invaders going into the temple of Peru, and seeing floors, roofs, and walls made of slabs of gold, and standing astonished. But oh! in the church there are slabs of faith on the floor of that great temple, and walls of love of Christian self-sacrifice, and roofs of holy joy and Christian consolation. It is a temple that makes spiritual eyes flash with gladness.

What care they for the splendor of kings and princes? But they care much for the true, desirable things of nations—holy emotions, holy desires, ascriptions of gratitude, and devout acts of service for the Lord God. Oh! how glorious is the second temple, then, when the desirable men come to it and bring with them all the desirable things to make it glorious in the sight of God.

And then *this temple, thus built and thus adorned, will continue*. The text implies that, “I will shake all nations.” The apostle says that this signifies the things that can be shaken—that the things that cannot be shaken will remain, and that the desire of all nations must be put down as a thing that cannot be shaken.

The church, then, shall never be shaken, and the precious things that the church gives to her God shall not be shaken. Time will change many things. Great princes will be considered mere beggars, by and by in the esteem of men who know how to judge by character. Great men will shrivel into very small things—when they come to be tried, even by posterity.

And the judgment day—ah! how will that try the great ones of this earth? But the Christian church—the very gates of hell shall not prevail against her. Time shall not be able so much as to chip one of her polished stones. Her treasures of faith, and what not, the rich things that God has given her—these things shall never be stolen—they can never be shaken.

And then the crown of all is, “I will fill this house with my glory, saith the LORD.” This is the reason, the great charm of it all. God Himself dwells, as He dwells nowhere else, in His glory. The church, which we think two, and call militant and triumphant, is but one, after all, and God dwells in it. Oh! if we had but eyes to see it, the glory of God on earth is not much less than the glory of God in heaven, for the glory of a king in peace is one thing, but the glory of a conqueror in war is another thing, though I know which I prefer.

Yet if I transfer the figure, I have no preference between the glory of the God of peace in the midst of His obedient servants in His ivory palaces, and the glory of the Lord of hosts in the thick of this heavenly war, as He conflicts with human evil and brings forth glory to His saints out of all the mischief that Satan seeks to do to His throne and to His scepter.

God is known in the Jerusalem below, as well as in the Jerusalem above. “The LORD is in the midst of her.” Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined. God is in the midst of her—she shall not be moved. And though the kings gather together for her destruction, yet His presence is the river, the streams whereof make glad the City of God.

Yes, glorious things may well be spoken of Zion when we have such stones as precious men, such gifts as precious graces, such abiding character as God gives, and such a presence as the presence of God Himself.

But now, in the next place, if we take the other rendering of the text—

II. THE GLORY OF THE SPIRITUAL SECOND TEMPLE IS ACTUALLY THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST.

“I will shake all nations,” and He who is the desire of all nations shall come—a rendering which is not incorrect, and is established by a great mass of theologians, though, according to some of the ablest critics, a rendering scarcely to be sustained by the original. He who is the desire of all nations shall come, and that shall be the glory of the second spiritual temple. Jesus Christ, then, is the desire of all nations, if so we read the text, and this is doubtless true.

All nations have a dark and dim desire for Him. I say a dark desire, for without that adjective I could scarcely speak the truth. Most interesting chapters have been written by students of the history of mankind upon the preparedness of men’s hearts for the coming of Christ at His incarnation. It is very certain that almost all nations have a tradition of the coming one.

The Jews, of course, expected the Messiah. There were persons instructed according to the culture of various nations, which, though they do not expect the Messiah quite as clearly as the Jews, had almost as shrewd a guess as to what He might be and do as the mere ritualistic and Pharisaic Jews had. There was a notion all over the world at that time of Christ’s coming, that some great one was to descend from heaven and to come into this world for this world’s good. He was in that respect darkly and dimly the desire of all nations.

But in all nations there have been some persons more instructed to whom Christ has really been the object of desire with much more intelligence. Job was a Gentile and afeard of God. We have no reason to believe that Job was a solitary specimen of enlightened persons—we have reason rather to hope that in all countries all over the world God has had a chosen people, who have known and feared Him, who have not had all the light which has been given to us, but who better used what light they had and were guided by His secret Spirit to much more of light, perhaps, than we think it right, with our little knowledge, to credit them with.

These, then, as representatives of all the nations, were desiring the coming of the great Deliverer, the incarnate God. And in this sense, representatively, the whole of the world was desiring Christ in that higher sense—and He was the desire of all nations. But my brethren, does this mean, or does it not

mean, that Christ is exactly what all the nations need? If they did but know, if they could but understand Him, He is just what they would desire and should desire. Were their reason taught rightly, and were their minds instructed by the Spirit to desire the best in all the world, Christ is just what they need.

All the world desires a way to God. Hence men set up priests and anoint them with oil, and smear them with I know not what, only that they may be mediators between them and God. They must have something to come between their guilt and God's glorious holiness. Oh, if they knew it, what they want is Christ. You want no other priest, but the great "Apostle and High Priest of our profession". You want no mediator with God, but the one Mediator, the man Christ Jesus, who is also equal with God.

Oh! world, why will you go about to seek this priest and that other deceiver, when He whom you want is appointed by the Most High? He whom Jacob saw in his dream as the ladder which reached from earth to heaven is the only means—the Son of Man and yet the Son of God.

The world wants a peacemaker. Oh! how badly it wants it now! I seem, as I walk my garden, as I go to my pulpit, as I go to my bed, to hear the distant cries and moans of wounded and dying men. We are so familiarized each day with horrible details of slaughter, that if we give our minds to the thought, I am sure we must feel a nausea, a perpetual sickness creeping over us. The reek and steam of those murderous fields, the smell of the warm blood of men flowing out on the soil must come to us and vex our spirits. Earth needs a peacemaker and it is He, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, and the friend of Gentiles, the Prince of Peace, who will make war to cease unto the ends of the earth.

Man wants a purifier. Very many nations feel, somehow or other, that political affairs do not go as one could wish. There are great excellences in personal government, but great disadvantages. There are great excellences in republican government, but remarkable difficulties, too. There are supreme excellences, as we think, in our own form of government, but a great many things to be amended, for all that. And this world is altogether out of joint—it is a crazy old concern, and does not seem as if it could be amended with all the tinkering of our reformers in the lapse of years.

The fact is, it needs the Maker, who made it, to come in and put it to rights. It needs the Hercules that is to turn the stream right through the Augean stable. It wants the Christ of God to turn the stream of His atoning sacrifice right through the whole earth, to sweep away the whole filth of ages, and it never will be done unless He does it. He is the One, the true Reformer, the true rectifier of all wrong, and in this respect, the desire of all nations.

Oh, if the world could gather up all her right desires. If she could condense in one cry all her wild wishes. If all true lovers of mankind could condense their theories and extract the true wine of wisdom from them, it would just come to this—we want an Incarnate God and we have got the Incarnate God! Oh! nations, but you know it not! You, in the dark, are groping after Him and know not that He is there.

Brethren, I may add Christ is certainly the desire of all nations in this respect, that *we desire Him for all nations*. Oh! that the world were encompassed in His Gospel! Would God the sacred fire would run along the ground, that the little handful of corn on the top of the mountains would soon make its fruit to shake like Lebanon. Oh! when will it come, when will it come that all the nations shall know Him? Let us pray for it. Let us labor for it.

And one other meaning I may give to this—He is the desirable one of all nations, bringing back the former translation of this text. *He is the choice one of all nations.* He is the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. He, whom we love, is such a one that He can never be matched by another, his rival could not be found among the sons of men. There is none like Him. There is none like Him among the angels of light. There is none that can stand in comparison with Him.

The desire, the one that ought to be desired, the most desirable of all the nations, is Jesus Christ, and it is the glory of the Christian church, which is the second temple, that Christ is in her, her Head, her Lord. It is never her glory that she condescends to make an iniquitous union with the State. It is her glory that Christ is her sole King. It is her glory that He is her sole Prophet, He is her sole Priest, and that He then gives to all His people to be kings and priests with Him, Himself the center and source of all their glory and their power.

I cannot stay longer, though the theme tempts me, but must just give you the last word, which is this, *the visible glory of the true second temple will be Christ's second coming*. He, Himself, is her glory, whether at His first coming or at His second coming. The church will be no more glorious at the second coming than now.

“What!” say you, “no more glorious!” No, but more apparently glorious. Christ is as glorious on the cross as He is on the throne—it is the appearance only that shall alter. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, but they evermore are brightness itself, in the person of Jesus Christ.

Now, brethren, we are to expect, as long as this world lasts, that all things will shake that are to be moved. They will go on shaking. We call the world sometimes “terra firma”—it is not this world, surely, that deserves such a name as that—there is nothing stable beneath the stars. All things else will shake, and as the shaking goes on, Jesus Christ will, to those who know Him, become more and more their desire.

I suppose, if the world went on, in some things mending and improving, and were to go up to a point, we should not want Christ to come in a hurry, we would rather that things should be perpetuated—but the shaking will make Christ more and more the desire of the nations. “The whole creation groaneth,” is groaning up to now, but it will groan more and more “in pain together travailing”—the apostle says—“even until now.” The travailing pains grow worse, and worse, and worse, and it will be so with this world—it will travail till at last it must come to the consummation of her desire.

The church will say, “Come, Lord Jesus.” She will say it with gathering earnestness. She will continue still to say it, though there are intervals in which she will forget her Lord, but still her heart's desire will be that He will come. And at last *He will surely come and bring to this world not only Himself, the desire of all nations, but all that can be desired*, for those days of His, when He appears, shall be to His people as the days of heaven upon earth, the days of their honor, the days of their rest—the day in which the kingdoms shall belong unto Christ.

Oh! brethren, it is not for me to go into details on a subject which would require many discourses, and which could not be brought out in the few last words of a discourse. But here is the great hope of that splendid building, the church, which is desired. Her glory essentially lies in the Incarnate God, who has come into her midst.

Her glory manifestly will lie in the second coming of that Incarnate God, when He shall be revealed from heaven to those that look and are waiting for and hastening unto the coming of the Son of God—looking for Him with gladsome expectation. And this is the joy of the church. He has gone, but He has left word, “I will come again, and will receive you unto myself, that where I am, ye may be also.”

Remember the words that were spoken of the angels to the church, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here, gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus who is gone up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go up into heaven.” In *propria persona*—in very deed and truth, He shall come:

*“These eyes shall see Him in that day,
The God that died for me;
And all my rising bones shall say,
Lord, who is like to Thee?”*

Then shall come the adoption, the raising of the body, the reception of a glory to that body reunited to the soul, such as we have not dreamed of, for eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God has prepared for them that love Him. Though He has revealed them unto us by His Holy Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God, yet have our ears heard but little thereof, and we have not received the full discovery of the things that

shall be hereafter. The Lord bless you! May you all be parts of His church, have a share in His glory, and a share in the manifestation of that glory at the last.

Dear hearer, I would send you away with this one query in your ear—Is Christ your desire? Could you say, with David, “He is all my salvation and all my desire”? Could you gather up your feet in the bed, with dying Jacob, and say, “I have waited for thy will, O God”? By your desire shall you be known. The desire of the righteous shall be granted. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desire of your heart.

But the desire of many is a groveling desire. It is a sinful desire. It is a disgraceful desire—a desire which, if it be attained, the attainment of it will afford very brief pleasure. Oh! sinner, let your desires go after Christ. Remember if you would have Him, you have not to earn Him—fight for Him—win Him—but He is to be had for the asking.

“Lay hold,” says the apostle, “on eternal life.” As if it were ours, if we did but grip it. God give us grace to lay hold on eternal life, for Jesus from the cross is saying, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth,” and from His throne of glory He still is saying, “Come unto me,” exalted on high, to give repentance and remission of sin, and He will give them both to those who seek Him. Seek Him, then, this night. God grant it for His Son’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

HAGGAI 1-2:1-9; HEBREWS 7:15-28

HAGGAI 1

The subject is the building of the second temple. The people had been busily employed in building their own houses—some of them had gone to great expense and much labor upon these houses, but they had not built the temple of God. The prophet Haggai was sent to incite them to holy labor.

Verse 1-2. *In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerrubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people says, The time is not come, the time that the LORD’S house should be built.*

A bad excuse is thought to be better than none. These people would not object to the building of the Lord’s house, but they were willing to postpone so expensive a matter. There are always some persons who will not say that they decline self-sacrifice for Christ—that were more honesty than it were reasonable to expect from them, and honesty might cost their feelings too much, but they have some other reason or pretense of reason—“The time is not come that the LORD’S house should be built.”

Men are generally quick enough for anything that is for their own interest. “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” We must catch time by the forelock. Oh! if we had the same desire in the work and service of God—if we had the same desire—we should have the same promptitude to do our task. “The time is not come”—the time that the LORD’S house should be built.

3-4. *Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your paneled houses, and this house to lie in waste!*

They had wainscoted their houses with cedar and odoriferous wood, decorated them with carvings, whereas the plainest edifices would have sufficed. God will allow them to build their own house for necessary dwelling, but next to that should certainty come His house, before they took to decorating their own. “Is it time for you to do this?”

And indeed, it may well be said to many a wealthy man, “It does not appear to you to be time to aid foreign missions, but it does seem to you to be time to put another thousand pounds in bonds. It does not seem time for you to help the Bible Society, but it seems to be time to make another investment, and

purchase another estate that adjoins your own." "Is it time for you, oh! ye, to dwell in your cieled houses?"

5-6. *Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.*

Those people did not prosper—they were very prudent after a worldly sort, but somehow they did not get on. No! it is not what we do so much as God's prospering us that will make us really succeed. It is vain to rise up early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness. God must give us prosperity and He often withholds this where He sees it is not right. A man will not trust a bad steward, and though God has trusted many and many a bad steward for wise reasons, yet among His own people He often gives chastisements and deprives them of worldly comfort, when they use not what they have for His service.

I think I have heard some people say that ministers never ought to talk about money in the pulpit. The prophet Haggai did, however, and it is because ministers say so little about the consecration of their substance to God's cause that this most important part of true piety is often treated with levity—and with some even by disgust.

Nay, brethren, we must speak often. The great sin of the Christian church is withholding from God. Now is it the same sin as in the days of Haggai. "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, consider your ways." If you considered your ways, you would see that you have been losers by your attempts to gain. Consider your ways practically by altering them.

7-8. *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider your ways. Go up to the mountains, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.*

That should be the great objective that we should aim at in all we do—that God may be glorified—that God may take pleasure in it. It does not matter who we please if God is not pleased, nor who gets honor from what we give, if God is not glorified thereby.

9. *Ye looked for much, and lo it came to little.*

It vanished—the breeze was so strong that the unconsecrated substance went away like chaff.

9-11. *I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.*

Men make an inventory—item so many cattle, item so much corn, item so much wine. God can items, too, and He can curse all our blessings one by one. This catalog looks like it. If they have saved in all these, robbing God, God will take care that they shall get nothing by their doing.

12. *Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD.*

There is good bottom in those men who are led to duty when they are reminded of neglect and it is blessed work preaching where there is a conscience quick to accede to the admonition. I do not suppose it was so with all the people of Jerusalem, but it was with some of them, and those the leading men. Where high priests and men of authority lead the way, others, if not so prompt, are often guided by the principle of imitation and they follow the leader.

13. *Then spoke Haggai, the LORD'S messenger, the LORD'S message unto the people, saying. I am with you, saith the LORD.*

Here was the best cheer for them. They had engaged in God's business and God would be with them.

14-15. *And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the*

people; and they came and did work on the house of the LORD of hosts their God. In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

Notice that date—the four and twentieth day of the sixth month.

HAGGAI 2:1-9

Verse 1. *In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month.*

Not very long after.

2-3. *Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do you see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?*

It appears that the spirit of idleness had broken out again. As the walls began to rise, the older men wept at the recollection of what an inferior structure it would be, compared with the former building of Solomon, and the idlers, ready enough to use any excuse, are ready enough to cease work. Therefore God's prophet is at it again. If the fire begins to die out, the bellows must be used again.

The zeal of the Christian is very much like the zeal of these men of Jerusalem—very apt to flag—and the zeal of God's messenger must come to stir them up again.

5-6. *According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the LORD of hosts, Yet once more; it is a little while.*

Though as some read it, it is "but a little structure," but our reading is, perhaps, better—it is but a little while.

6-9. *And I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.*

Clearly encouraging them to proceed with their work.

HEBREWS 7:15-28

15-18. *And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.*

The old Levitical law is disannulled—it became weak and unprofitable—and now a higher and better dispensation is ushered in with a greater and undying priesthood.

19. *For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by which we draw nigh unto God.*

That is all it did—it was a steppingstone towards something better. "By which we draw nigh unto God." "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent."

20-24. *And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*

I think they reckoned that there were eighty-three high priests in regular succession from Aaron to the death of Phineas, the last high priest at the siege of Jerusalem. One succeeded another, but this one

goes on continually, forever has an untransferable priesthood. That word “untransferable” is nearer to the meaning than this “unchangeable.” If any of you have old Bibles with the margin, you will see, “hath a priesthood which cannot be passed from one hand to another,” and the margin happens in this case to have the true rendering, “This man hath an untransferable priesthood.”

25. *Therefore he is also able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

“For such an high priest became us.”

We want just that high priest who would live on forever throughout all the ages forever to sustain His people and do for them all they should need to have done for them, until time should be no more.

26-28. *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*

There is our joy.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.